

## **Alien life**

### **SCRIPT:**

Searching among the stars for another civilization would not seem to be a serious scientific mission. But it is. It's a search that began with the planet Mars. In the early 1900's, some scientists thought they saw canals on Mars, perhaps the remains of an ancient civilization more advanced than our own. The Martian canals turned out to be an illusion, but the search for intelligent life had just begun.

Right now, four NASA spacecraft are on an endless journey through space. Each of them carries a gold plaque that sends our greetings to anything – or anyone – out there who might find them. And right now, radio telescopes are pointed at the stars, listening for a signal from another civilization. Have we heard anything? Nothing. So, why keep trying? Well, because scientific evidence just keeps building in favor of the idea that we're not alone. We've just discovered evidence that planets, lots of other planets, are circling other stars. In fact, it now looks like billions of other planets that no one has ever seen are circling billions of other stars...just like we circle the Sun.

For scientists, it's a major discovery. It's now become a race to find these new worlds, to look for signs of life, and yes...to listen. Because if space is not just a vast ocean of stars, but a vast ocean of other worlds...the chances are better than ever that something – or someone else – is out there.

### **Relevant NSES Standards**

NSES Content Standard A: Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry.

(Grades K-4) Evidence and the merit of an idea.

(Grades 5-8) Identify questions with scientific concepts.

(Grades 9-12) Using mathematical models for scientific inquiry.

NSES Content Standard B: Physical science.

(Grades 9-12) Elements have same properties wherever they are found.

NSES Content Standard D: Earth and space science.

(Grades K-4) Objects in the sky. Stars (and planets).

(Grades 9-12) Formation of the earth system.

NSES Content Standard E: Understanding about science and technology.

(Grades K-4) Science helps explain people's questions about the world.

(Grades 9-12) Science often advances with introduction of new technology.

NSES Content Standard F: Science in social perspectives.

(Grades 5-12) Society's interest can direct scientific inquiry.

NSES Content Standard G: History and nature of science.

(Grades K-4) Science has been practiced for a long time.

(Grades 5-12) Science can change as new evidence becomes available.

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